

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 DRC-01 /160 W

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R 261543Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1579

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMCONSUL KADUNA

AMCONSUL IBADAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 8666

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NI, IS

SUBJECT: ISRAELI/NIGERIAN RELATIONS

REF: LAGOS 8614, LAGOS 8601

1. ISRAELI AMBASSADOR BEN-YAACOV APPEARED, UNANNOUNCED, AT EMBASSY 1030 OCTOBER 26 AND ASKED TO SPEAK WITH DCM IN ABSENCE OF AMBASSADOR.

2. BEN-YAACOV SAID HE WOULD HAVE CALLED FIRST, BUT SINCE BREAK OF RELATIONS HIS HOME AND OFFICE PHONES, AS WELL AS TELEX, HAVE BEEN OUT. HE SAID HE JUST WANTED TO INFORM US HOW THINGS STOOD. HE IS CURRENTLY MAKING ARRANGEMENTS TO DEPART AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, PERHAPS IN TEN DAYS. GENERAL GOWON, HE SAID, ASSURED HIM AT TIME OF BREAK THAT IT DID NOT REFLECT ILL WILL TOWARD ISRAELIS AS INDIVIDUALS AND THAT PRIVATE ISRAELI BUSINESS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED.

3. DCM ASKED IF THERE WERE ISRAELI AID PROJECTS THAT WOULD BE DISRUPTED BY THE BREAK. BEN-YAACOV SAID THERE ARE ABOUT 15 NIGERIANS CURRENTLY IN ISRAEL FOR TRAINING AND AS FAR AS ISRAEL
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IS CONCERNED, THEY CAN STAY AND COMPLETE THEIR PROGRAMS. THERE

ARE NO ISRAELI ASSISTANCE PROJECTS AND PERSONNEL CURRENTLY IN NIGERIA, BUT A GROUP WAS DUE TO COME NEXT MONTH. IT WILL OF COURSE NOT COME NOW. ISRAELI BUSINESS AND CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES OPERATING UNDER CONTRACT IN BENIN, IBADAN AND KADUNA ARE EXPECTED TO REMAIN AND CONTINUE NORMAL OPERATIONS.

4. BEN-YAACOV APPEARED QUITE PHILOSOPHIC ABOUT THE BREAK AND BRUSHED OFF EXPRESSIONS OF REGRET AT THE WAY THINGS HAD DEVELOPED BY SAYING "WE HAVE SURVIVED WORSE THAN THIS." HE SEEMED TO SHARE OUR GENERAL IMPRESSION THAT WHILE FMG HAD BEEN UNDER SEVERE AND GROWING PRESSURE FROM ARAB STATES, IT MIGHT NOT HAVE BROKEN IF MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS HAD NOT TAKEN THEIR RECENT COURSE ON SUEZ FRONT. AT SAME TIME, HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT GOWON'S POSITION AS OAU CHAIRMAN MADE SITUATION PARTICULARLY AWKWARD FOR HIM AS INCREASING NUMBERS OF AFRICAN STATES BROKE WITH ISRAEL. HE CONCLUDED WITH OBSERVATION THAT SEVERAL AFRICAN STATES HAVE BEEN WATCHING NIGERIA AND IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE HOW MANY ADDITIONAL BREAKS OF RELATIONS WILL FOLLOW.
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